

Webcasting - some notes to help Members

Chairing Skills

The chair of the meeting is vital to the viewing experience of the public, just as if there was a full public gallery. Here are some tips for chairs to consider

- Introduce the key players at the meeting so that viewers know who they are looking at. This might include the chair themselves, officers, and witnesses. It is important to say what their role is at the meeting too.
- Be prepared to explain some meeting procedures if these are not obvious to viewers. For example, if the meeting is going into recess, explain why this is and when the meeting will reconvene.
- Be prepared to enforce time restraints on speakers either formal ones if they apply or if someone's contribution is long and unproductive.
- Don't forget to remind everyone that the meeting is being broadcast and will be available in future on the Internet.
- Make clear the different elements of the agenda, such as the nature of interests and why people might leave the meeting. Also if the Webcast is going to be suspended for exempt or confidential items you'll need to say when and why this will happen.
- As a chair you may be required to handle the equipment, for example selecting the next speaker make sure that you have guidance in advance on how to do this.

HOT TIPS – APPEARING ON CAMERA

Be Comfortable Confident and in Control

Know what you actually want to say – be direct and to the point

Decide on your key message – no more than three

Prepare in advance your bullet points and any questions

Consider how your comments could be used by the media

Does it open you up to criticism or even censure?

Be in Control of yourself and what you say

It's important to feel confident and comfortable in what you wear – image is important

Keep an eye on your body language

Be aware of what image you portray to the public – if you are texting, tweeting or blogging what impression does that give

Know your facts and figures and use them properly

Don't ever stop, pause and create long silences, never ever walk off refusing to answer a question

Think of how the authority looks if you put an officer on the spot

Don't use abbreviations or jargon

Avoid dramatisation

Apologise if necessary

Above all BE HONEST

How the professionals do it !

Prepare your body and mind. Don't rush into a public meeting - flustered and unprepared

Take a few minutes before to take a walk or at least go to the loo . Sportspeople warm up – you need to as well

Realise you can control your pitch, tone and speed of delivery.

Respect the beginning and end of words

Remember your breathing. Take deep breaths and you will be able to sound more confident and will have less tendency to rush your delivery

If you are stumbling over words the chances are you are rushing. Slow down

Understand the body signals you are sending out. If you are nervous you are inclined to avoid eye contact, busy yourself tidying, flick your pen, spin around in the chair, adjust your tie, fuss with your hair – don't do any of those things while you are being filmed or recorded.

Don't just go through the motions. If this job is worth doing, it is worth doing well.

You need to overact by about ten per cent. You know how you get a bit more serious than you really need to when you tell off your children – think about using that power of measuring energy when you do an interview

Smile before you speak – if it's appropriate

Make sure you are concise and filter out the less than interesting things ie does it interest me – or the man in the pub do I want to find out how it ends?. Then tell the story confidently.

Try to keep each point to half a minute or less.

Be kind to yourself – don't be too self critical.

Remember, the written word is great for complexity, the spoken word isn't. Be simple and clear; don't try to pack too much in. Think IMPACT

Think of John Major leaving Downing St with the words : When the curtain falls it is time to leave the stage.

Or Geoffrey Howe, saying that serving under Mrs Thatcher was like "being sent out to bat only to find the bat had been broken before the game by the team captain".

Or even Martin Luther King: "We have come to our nation's capital to cash a cheque... America has given the Negro people a bad cheque which has come back marked 'insufficient funds'. But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt."

If you doubt the power of short anecdotes, how many words do you think the parable of the Good Samaritan has? Just 165.